



NEW SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA

Ukaegbu O. Chidi

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Email: co.ukaegbu@unizik.edu.ng

Book review by Ukaegbu, O. Chidi

Book title: New Scramble for Africa (yr) Osita C. Eze and Chike A. Anigbo (Eds.)

Published by the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, Nigeria.

Pagination: 164

Index: ISBN 978-002-081-0

The book begins with a welcome address by the then Nigerian minister of foreign affairs Joy U. Ogwu who set the tone for the other chapters by differentiating the old scramble from the new scramble. In the new scramble, Africa has a chance to take charge of its own affairs. In chapter one, L. Adele Jinadu dwelt on the conceptual and theoretical issues in the scramble for Africa. The term scramble is a figurative or euphemistic expression denoting the expansionist imperialistic policy of the principal European powers of the 19th

century ratified by the Berlin Conference of 1884/85. It was impelled by the drive to maintain balance of power in Europe. To understand the nature of the scramble, materialistic, historical, dialectical, social and psychological approaches must be adopted. He argued that the new scramble sets in motion a new process of globalization propelled by the transnationalization of capital in search of new markets and the logic of capital accumulation. Thus, the term new scramble is used to capture the exploring



hegemonizing character of contemporary globalization. Available data on capital transfers and decline in the standard of living in the periphery further process the effect of the new scramble. The new scramble and new imperialism pose serious possibilities for recolonization of Africa. Thus, the way out will not be to return to the idea of pan Africanism that would facilitate a coordinated continental response to the new scramble

In chapter two, Mike Kwanashie delved into a historical perspective on the scramble. To him, the continuing scramble of the resources of Africa reflects the dynamics of a global economic system of centuries past enabled by contacts with European powers, the effect of which the continent practically struggling if not unable to rub off. Historically, Africa provided the resources needed by nthw world to build its economic system in the 19th century but is today unable to evolve any

meaningful development stride except those propelled from without. The merchantilist period induced the scramble for Africa and has since continued on Africa only transforming itself as capitalist expansion demanded. Of great importance was the development of capital in industrialized countries leaving rest of the world as suppliers of food and raw materials. Even with the attainment of independence, the colonialists ensured that only weak states emerged that can not challenge the dominant interest of the capitalist states and this has remained till date thereby giving access to the resources of African states. It was thought that the first and second After world wars would have spelt a great doom to the world economy but western states quickly reunited to form financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund, World Banks etc to revive western capital to facilitate a coordinated and orderly scramble for African



resources. The new nature of the scramble was perfectly defined by the emergence of unipolar world following the failure of African states to initein favour of the ideological stance of the Soviet Union. Prior to 1884, Africa was technologically ahead of some now industrialized capitalist states but internal and external contradictions resulting from her contact with the west stunted her progress and brought it to where it is today. Following this contact, African economies were structured to allow the evacuation of minerals and agricultural resources from the hinterland. Hence, the post-Berlin conference was simply a continuation of the process of scramble for African resources. Some have argued that this contact in form of colonialism lead to some forms of development but Mike argued that it is a product of capitalist expansion driven by profit maximization and the colonial states do not develop by its own nature. African

development has remained problematic because it is predicated on global capital from which it cannot extricate itself. The only way out he argued is a deconstruction of her economy for a.orw self-reliant, people-focused, just and egalitarian system. America's interest in Africa was engineered by the desire to ensure that African was in consonance with ideals it propagated following the failure of the Soviet Union. Again, U.S became interested in Africa's natural resources and the expansion of U.S capital around the world. Though the Soviet Union considered as a late comer to African continent made effort to gather ideological support from Africa so as to increase her say in the global economy. This however did not happen thus justifying the emergence of a world economy that advances the interet if the west.

Africa and the global economy was the issue for analysis in chapter three written by Peter



Egonu. He considered the effect of U.S dominance of the international finance system and posited that the fixed and floating rate variants of the gold exchange standard are core tools for entrenching grinding poverty in second tier non convertible and non-reserve currency world of the global South and exponential wealth and affluence in the financial convertible and reserve currency west. Thus, Africa has remained the eternal resource reservoir of the global economy.

This chapter (3) would have made more meaning if the author had done a brief definition/explanation of some compound terms used like first tier, two tier, multilateral trade and payment system, floating rate, reserve and non-reserve currency, fixed rate, CFA currency, three-legged economies, public sector debt money etc couched in abstraction. Again, the private gold International reserve chart should been more

bold and legible for readers. Every capitalist economy depends on public sector debt money to drive it is economic policy. It is an error to claim that the reserve currency nations are the donors to the non-convertible currency nations of the globe. Thus, human development is denied in second tier nations because of the rain fiscalist phenomenon of public sector borrowing requirements and interest. The floating rate gold exchange debt standard is a good to China but a set back to the west and Africa because of the separate economic objectives they seek to achieve. The bank for African settlement has a primary duty of transmitting African economy from asymmetry in economic distribution to symmetry. As such, it is synonymous with an African industrial location policy that would bring permanent reversal in the current post colonial and massive rural urban drift of Africans in the working age bracket. Achieving this makes



Africa unarguably capstone in any viable global attempt to revamp the economy of Europe and North America.

In chapter four, the new scramble for Africa through a strategic policy was examined by C.C Nwoke. The author started by setting the question right with focus on efforts made to eliminate the very exploitation bonds that held Africa prostrate. This to him should begin by first analysing the situation correctly before adopting appropriate measures in tackling the situation. He argued that U.S presence in the gulf of Guinea and establishment of U.S-African under guises were legs of the new scramble for Africa including the increasing presence of Asian countries in the last two decades like the old scramble a roundtable may as well be initiated to share the loot of the new scramble of a continent forcefully incorporated into the international capitalist economy though disposed, paralysed and traumatized.

According to him, the pattern of production, specialization and consumption in African colonies were deliberately changed to facilitate colonial exploitation and this led to external distortion and disarticulation of African economy. Even the Bretton Wood institutions have assumed responsibility of directing, supervising and monitoring development in the various neo-colonial states. Africa remains one of the most richly endowed regions but the poorest continent. Embarking on a path of economic independence and self-reliance is the greatest challenge posed by the new scramble for Africa and be focused on anti-colonial imperialism not to develop Africa for Africans. The intention of the new and the old scramble remain the same to both Asian and western powers secure sources of critical raw materials at cheap cost and lucrative markets for finished goods. The use of these rather compound terminologies and concepts with



down-to-earth explanations makes understanding rather difficult.

In chapter five, Osita Eze took to analysing the dynamics of external interest in Africa. He averred that external interest is capped by its main objective is to gain access to the resource rich continent. Thus, he shared the same opinion with previous writers. Globalization for him is a contested concept with implications for all peoples in the world. Scholars who are aware of the sinister implications of globalization link poverty among groups to it. Globalization has

the capability of marginalizing developing parts of the world making groups therein poorer goals of development efforts. The collapse of the Eastern bloc led to the emergence of a global economy governed by the interest of the west. No doubt that globalization is one of the challenging development

References

Ezem O.C; Anigbo, C. A. (2010). *New Scramble for Africa*. Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, Nigeria.